

MEMORANDUM



Transportation

TO: Mayor Robinson and City Councilmembers
FROM: Chris Iverson, Senior Transportation Engineer, 452-6461
DATE: February 14, 2022
RE: Background for 2022 proposed Transportation related Comprehensive Plan amendments

Curb Management Plan – Policy Approach

On November 15, 2021, Council approved a consultant contract and scope of work for the Curb Management Plan (CMP). This CMP effort seeks to establish more deliberate policies, practice, and guidance on how curb areas should be designed, maintained, and operated over time.

Curb Management – Background

Curb spaces typically lie within public right-of-way on transportation facilities. These curbside areas have traditionally been used for travel lanes, bus stops, and on-street parking zones for automobiles. However, the exponential growth of new mobility solutions and curbside placemaking strategies – as well as the accelerating growth within Bellevue’s urban neighborhoods – have placed new burdens on traditional curbside uses and highlighted new importance on establishing better long-range curb management practices.

Competing demands among new mobility uses – such as app-based rideshare and taxi services, urban freight uses, employer shuttles, and micromobility functions like free-floating bikeshare – are resulting in novel challenges at the curbside. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, cities around the country have experimented utilizing curb space for placemaking functions, such as creating outdoor dining areas, installing public seating zones, establishing dedicated food truck spaces, and expanding tree canopy and greenery zones. Other innovative curbside functions include the advent of common carrier delivery lockers, mobility hubs, and electric vehicle charging stations. Ultimately, the curb is a multifaceted zone that can act as a tool for aiding mobility, commerce, and placemaking goals.

Currently, Bellevue policy speaks to managing curb areas in an ad-hoc manner. This approach does not reflect the growing need to approach curb management in a comprehensive way. As such, new and modified policy direction will allow staff to approach these rising curb management challenges in a more deliberate and mindful manner. Additionally, new policy and operational frameworks will be needed to ensure that curb spaces are aligned with other City goals, such as the recently adopted Environmental Stewardship Plan.

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Curb Space as Dynamic Space

In Bellevue, the curb has served as a relatively static zone throughout the course of the City's growth. Travel lanes and parking zones are established today with invariable operational rules that do not account for fluctuating traffic patterns. For example, curbside on-street parking areas in downtown Bellevue are almost universally offered as 2-hour parking between 7AM and 6PM, while curbside travel lanes are maintained at all times of the day and week. These operation rules do not account for traffic demand variation, thus causing relative inefficiency in the transportation system.

A more dynamic approach to curb management would be responsive to observed transportation and land use demands during various time periods. Additionally, a dynamic approach would provide the foundation for allowing staff and the community to formally expand the definition of what curb areas can facilitate. Examples of dynamic curb uses include:

- Establishing time-of-day loading zones in parking areas to pair with peak delivery demands
- Implementing seasonal or year-round "al fresco" curbside dining areas in commercial nodes
- Adding designated curbside mobility hubs near high-capacity transit stations to facilitate micromobility and passenger pick-up / drop-off functionalities

Establishing a comprehensive and dynamic mindset for curb management may require additional resources to properly operate. Currently, City policy does not support employing a comprehensive curb management strategy nor a dedicated curb management program.

Existing Policy Supporting Curb Management

The genesis of the CMP is supported by existing Comprehensive Plan policies, City documents, and operational approaches. Some examples of existing Comprehensive Plan language that speaks to curb management include:

Downtown Subarea Plan

- **S-DT-135.** Provide space within or near Downtown for bus layovers and other bus transit facilities needed to support projected levels of transit service.
- **S-DT-157.1** Add new permanent on-street parking spaces in high-opportunity locations that meet engineering standards for traffic safety.
- **S-DT-157.2** Explore adding temporary on-street parking spaces for use during off-peak hours.
- **S-DT-157.3** Consider developing a proposal to implement a pay for on-street parking program.

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- **TR-128.** Provide for curbside space to accommodate small-scale parcel delivery and loading through development review
- **TR-143.** Provide curbside spaces for electric vehicle charging stations where on-street parking is allowed.
- **TR-149.** Minimize spillover parking into residential neighborhoods through residential parking zones and other measures.

Through the CMP development process, policy language will be added, removed, and modified to support an upgraded comprehensive curb management strategy. Policies will be intended to guide decision-making primarily in the urban core neighborhoods of Bellevue, which include Downtown, BelRed, Wilburton, and East Main. The proposed changes to policy will conform to processes and criteria listed in Section 20.30I in the City of Bellevue Land Use Code. Proposed policy amendments will address significantly changed conditions since Comprehensive Plan language was last amended.

Curb Management Plan – Amendments

At the January 13th, 2022 Transportation Commission meeting, staff introduced the scope of the Curb Management Plan that was approved by Council on November 15th, 2021. Pending Council direction, the Transportation Commission will guide the development of policy recommendations in support of the CMP. While specific policy amendments are not yet articulated, it is intended that new and modified language would provide a broader foundation for enacting curb management strategies and programs.

Transportation Commission will be tasked to work with staff and the community to establish draft policies in support of the CMP. These draft policies will be transmitted to the Planning Commission in 2022 and are anticipated to be included with other annual city-initiated and privately-initiated Comprehensive Plan Amendment work programs.